

Land Use Element

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Land Use Element is to shape the desired future physical composition of Surprise while also supporting and enhancing the City's existing quality of life. Through the application of policy guidance and supporting land use maps, this element directs and defines the desired development patterns within the City as well as establishes a framework for future land use planning and decision-making within Surprise's overall planning area. This causes the Land Use Element to have one of the broadest scopes amongst all the elements in the Surprise General Plan, making it the most frequently used and referenced section of the plan.

DISCUSSION

Currently, the City's incorporated land area is approximately 108 square miles. In contrast, the City's Planning Area – the unincorporated land area outside of the city's boundary that it may consider annexing at some point in the future – encompasses over 302 square miles. With such a large planning area in relation to the City's current municipal limits, Surprise is a community that is poised for continued growth in the future. Defining where and how this growth will occur is imperative to maintaining a community character that is distinct to Surprise.

The Land Use Element of the General Plan provides the critical foundation upon which to guide this expected growth. While there are many ways in which Surprise can grow, this Land Use Element utilizes a sustainable approach that balances development and conservation within the Surprise planning area to ensure that infrastructure is maximized and adequate distribution of services, employment, open space and recreation are provided in proximity to where people live.

The Land Use Element is divided into three sections. The first section provides a general overview of Surprise's existing community form and land ownership composition. The second section lists goals and policies that provide guidance to Surprise on land use decisions. The third and final section provides detailed descriptions of the character areas and associated strategies, along with a map, that form the vision for future land use within Surprise.

CHARACTER AREA APPROACH

In order to retain and improve its identity as a distinct city, Surprise seeks to manage future growth by promoting physical development that is not only attractive, but also expresses a unique overall community character.

To work towards this vision for development, the City has moved away from the 'Village Planning' model which focused on the rigid placement of individual land use types within specific geographic areas, to a more holistic 'Character Area' approach which places a greater emphasis on delineating areas of common identity or desired characteristics.

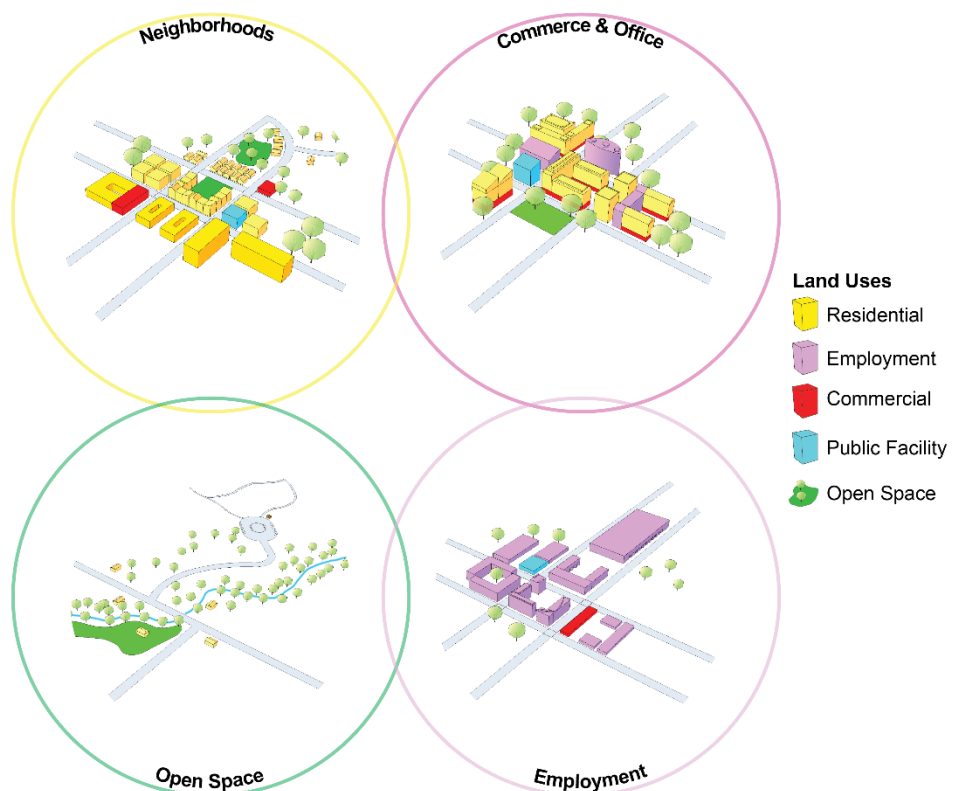
Land Use Character Areas

Character Area-based planning recognizes that; rather than promote the traditional division of like land uses into large homogenous planning areas; it is the combined form, density, intensity, and development pattern of a defined area that gives it an identifiable character. In turn, it is the collection of these individual character areas that then combine to create a truly unique community.

The Surprise General Plan embraces this understanding by establishing Character Areas that first define the desired look or "feel" of an area and then provide more detailed guidance relevant to the specific use of land within those areas in order to achieve the desired overall character. This approach gives growth an enhanced capacity to fit into the "big picture" in terms of achieving the overall land use goals of the General Plan, while still addressing development issues or concerns of particular importance to specific areas of the community. By placing a larger focus on the character of an area, greater flexibility can also be applied to future development decisions while still maintaining an area's overall sense of place.

The Surprise Land Use Character Areas are grouped into four (4) different functional types, which are identified and described in greater detail on the following pages:

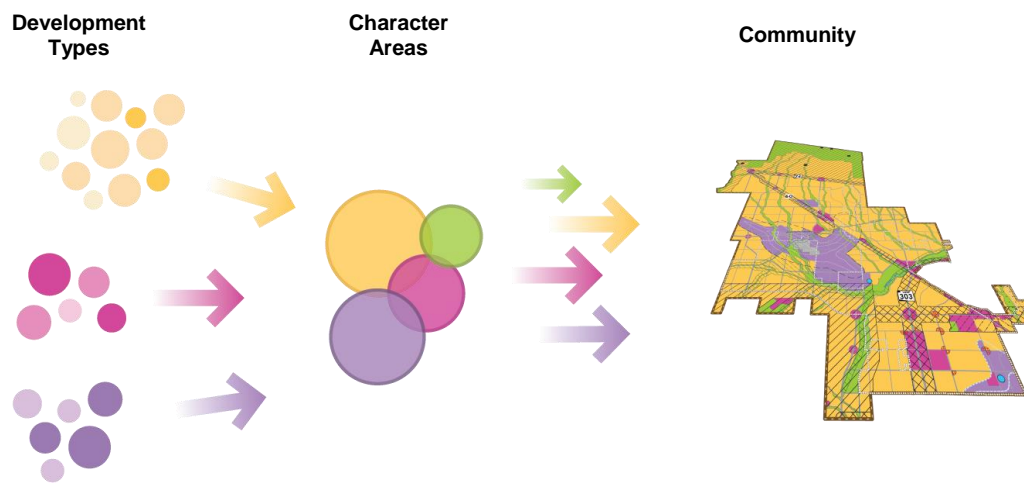
- Neighborhoods
- Commerce & Office
- Employment
- Open Space



Development Types

The Land Use Character Areas establish the basic framework that will guide development within Surprise. The broad nature of development possibilities within some of these Character Areas requires additional refinement to better clarify the desired land use pattern within these large planning areas. Therefore, several Character Areas are further defined by sub-descriptions or 'Development Types'.

Development Types provide a higher level of detail to ensure land use compatibility is maintained within each Character Area, but still provide a degree of flexibility that allows development to adjust to unknown future conditions. Each Development Type provides further descriptions of different functional characteristics that are prevalent with a given Character Area and can be applied based on many factors including the need to preserve existing special features, establish a desired future state, or respond to specific, unique development issues.



Organization of Land Use Character Area, Sub-Area and Development Type Descriptions

Each of the following Land Use Character Area, or corresponding Development Type, descriptions includes a general narrative that presents the intent of the individual category. Narratives are then followed by common planning development guidelines (such as density limits, transition measures, aesthetics and built form standards, and typical uses) that are intended to provide enough detail to envision the future built environment associated with that category. These planning descriptions are also provided to give specific guidance about how land use decisions should be made regarding future individual development applications.

While these guidelines help to inform the development process, they are not meant to strictly limit the design process. Creative and innovative design solutions are encouraged to help achieve the desired overall community character.

Land Use Character Area Map

The following Land Use Character Area map is a key component of the Surprise General Plan. This map is a graphic representation of the desired Character Area pattern for all land within Surprise's planning area. The map specifically indicates the intended distribution and type of Land Use Character Areas and Sub-Areas. The map should be used in conjunction with the application of goals, policies, and guidelines outlined in this Land Use element as well as all other applicable elements of this General Plan. Although not a zoning map, this Land Use Character Area map should also be referenced to guide future development and zoning decisions as they pertain to the City of Surprise, or its Planning Area.

Neighborhood Land Use Character Area

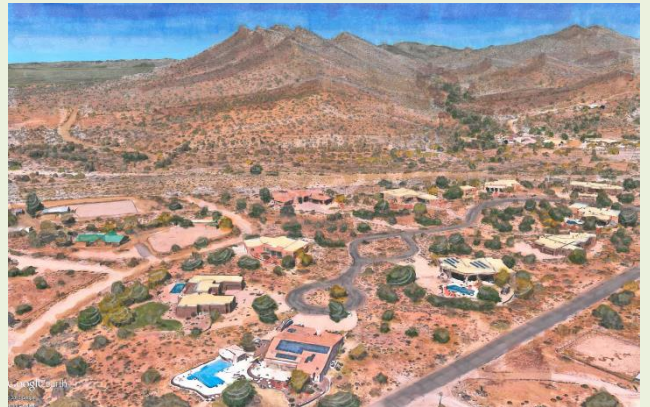
Covering the largest geographic planning area, the Neighborhood Land Use Character Area represents the various residential neighborhoods within Surprise. While neighborhoods are predominantly residential areas they can also be supported by locally oriented commercial and public facility uses, and can range from established to emerging and urban to rural in nature. The combination of the majority of residential uses into the Neighborhood Character Area, makes this one of the most character defining features of the City. While each neighborhood can have particular elements that make it unique (i.e. architectural style, streetscape design, recreational amenities, etc.), all neighborhoods can generally be classified into three basic Development Types based on their existing or desired mix of uses, building type, and density.

The Neighborhood Land Use Character Area includes the following Development Types:

- Rural Neighborhoods
- Suburban Neighborhoods
- Urban Neighborhoods

Rural Neighborhoods

Rural Neighborhoods represent areas defined by low-density residential uses, and limited low intensity neighborhood commercial and civic uses that are necessary to support the rural lifestyle. These areas typically lie just outside the Suburban Neighborhoods and are intended to preserve and enhance the natural desert landscape and appropriate agricultural uses. Housing is scattered across the landscape in a random pattern, within large-lot subdivisions, or clustered to preserve open space, views, and other natural features. Because trip distances are typically too long for walking, transportation mobility is largely dependent on automobiles but non-motorized trail facilities are included where appropriate. The availability of public infrastructure is limited.



Density Range:

0-2 du/ac

Typical Uses

- Agricultural uses and accessory uses such as barns or stables
- Large-lot single-family residential uses
- Neighborhood Commercial uses necessary to support the rural lifestyle including small-scale retail or grocery stores, feed and tack stores, and commercial nurseries
- Civic benefit uses such as places of worship, schools, municipal parks or preserves, etc.

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Suburban Neighborhoods

Suburban Neighborhoods represent the transition area between rural settings and urban environments. These neighborhoods reflect the most common pattern of development in the City, and are where the majority of Surprise's population growth will be concentrated. Suburban neighborhoods include predominantly medium-density residential housing types that serve varying income levels. While residential is the primary land use within this neighborhood, they can also include neighborhood and community commercial, professional offices, schools, places of worship, parks, and other civic uses. Most development occurs in large to medium sized planned communities that utilize well-connected street and trail networks to encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel between uses and minimize the need for motor vehicle trips within the neighborhood. All uses in Suburban Neighborhoods are predominantly served by public infrastructure.



Density Range

2-8 du/ac

Typical Uses

- Medium-lot single-family residential uses
- Small-lot single-family residential uses – such as alley loaded, duplexes, court and patio homes, and townhouses
- Neighborhood and Community Commercial uses – such as full service grocery stores, drug stores, personal services, and convenience uses
- Professional Office uses – such as medical office, small-business services
- Civic benefit uses such as places of worship, schools, municipal parks or preserves, etc.

Urban Neighborhoods

Urban neighborhoods are the highest density residential areas in the City. They generally function as a transitional use between lower intensity suburban areas and high volume roadways/transit corridors, more intensive regional commercial centers, or employment areas. Urban neighborhoods are predominantly residential in nature and are characterized by a diverse mix of residential types; from small-lot to vertical multi-unit development. However, community commercial uses along with professional employment and civic uses can also be embedded within this neighborhood type. This mixture of residential and nonresidential uses are typically in close proximity to one another to promote a dense, pedestrian oriented, urban environment. The resulting development patterns provide higher street connectivity, smaller block lengths, improved transit options and the greatest degree of public infrastructure services.



Density Range

8+ du/ac

Typical Uses

- Small-lot single-family attached residential uses – such as duplexes, court or patio homes, and townhouses
- Multi-family residential uses – such as condominiums and apartments
- Vertical mix of residential uses, while integrating commercial development
- Community Commercial uses – such as full service grocery stores, drug stores, personal services, and convenience uses
- Professional Office uses – such as medical office and small-business services
- Civic benefit uses such as places of worship, schools, municipal parks or preserves, etc.

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Commerce & Office Land Use Character Area

Due to their prominent geographic location, relationship to adjacent land uses and/or proximity to regional transportation corridors, some areas within the City allow for and encourage greater flexibility in the application of future land uses. The Commerce & Office Land Use Character Area defines those unique areas within the City that, because of their broad development potential, can comfortably accommodate a variety of land uses. These areas contain the highest intensity of development in the City and are intended to provide opportunities for a mixture of commercial and retail uses, office and employment areas, higher density housing, hospitality developments, government and civic uses, educational and medical campuses, and entertainment choices to encourage a true live, work, play environment.

Unlike smaller urban mixed use developments that are typically dedicated to the vertical integration of uses within a single building, the Commerce & Office Land Use Character Area supports both a horizontal and vertical mixture of uses on a larger scale. However, the development pattern for this character area remains walkable and accommodates other forms of transportation including cars, bicycles, and transit to encourage a more urban style living environment.

Commerce & Office Character Areas can generally be classified into four basic Development Types based on their existing or desired mix of uses:

- Mixed Use – Residential
- Mixed Use – Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Commercial Office

Typical Uses

- Multi-family residential uses – such as condominiums and apartments
- Regional Commercial uses – such as restaurants, clothing apparel, department stores, big box anchor stores, resorts, hotels, and movie or entertainment centers.
- Professional Office uses – such as medical campus, corporate campus, and small-business services
- Civic uses such as City government, cultural facilities, education campuses, and municipal parks

Commerce & Office development guidelines unique to each Development Type:

See the following sections for development guidelines specific to each Commerce & Office development type

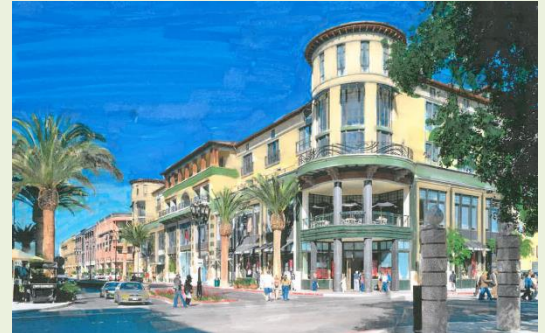
Mixed Use – Residential:

Includes a vertical and or horizontal mixture of residential and non-residential land uses where the residential component of the project constitutes at least 75% of the overall square footage (vertical mixed use) or acreage (horizontal mixed use). The remaining 25% of the square footage or acreage would constitute commercial retail, office, education, medical, entertainment or civic related uses.



Mixed Use – Commercial:

Includes a vertical and or horizontal mixture of commercial land uses where the commercial (or non-residential) component of the project constitutes at least 75% of the overall square footage (vertical mixed use) or acreage (horizontal mixed use). The remaining 25% of the square footage or acreage would constitute supporting residential uses.



Regional Commercial:

Includes retail and service oriented businesses that can serve a 5 to 10 mile trade area. Regional shopping centers, lifestyle centers, power centers, “big box” anchor stores, entertainment centers, resorts, hotels and other supporting restaurants and specialty stores.



Commercial Office:

Consists of a more intensive collection of mid-rise professional office buildings that are concentrated in an urban development form that, by their very nature, also attract supporting retail, restaurant, hotel and civic spaces to support the concentration of professional offices. Educational and medical campuses along with their typical support facilities may also be located within this development type. Stand-alone multi-family residential development could be integrated into the overall design, were appropriate, to offer housing options near quality jobs that shorten commute times and reduce congestion.



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Employment Land Use Character Area

The Employment Land Use Character Area is intended to promote economic and business development opportunities that create jobs that are vital to the economic sustainability and growth of the City of Surprise. The largest concentration of the Employment Land Use Character Area is located in close proximity to the Luke AFB Auxiliary 1 field. This designation of large acreage around the Luke Aux 1 field is intended to support and protect the mission of Luke AFB, but also is designated to maximize the clustering of employment-related uses for specialization, synergy, transportation efficiency and exchange of knowledge. Strong access to transportation and water/wastewater infrastructure is necessary to attract and support value-added employment generating businesses into these areas.

Typical employment sites and building development should promote the specific needs of large-scale activities and/or clustering of smaller, complimentary businesses designed in a cohesive, campus style setting. Appropriate uses within the Employment Character Area include those that generate employment such as research/development/hi-tech parks, corporate campuses or business parks, manufacturing/processing facilities, distribution centers, medical campuses, and office/industrial flex spaces.

The Employment Character Area includes a distinct set of development types that include the following:

- Business Parks
- Industrial

Business Parks

The Business Park Development Type can contain a variety of businesses, offices and light industrial oriented uses that are connected in their street access, site design and orientation and architectural design. Typical uses will consist of research and development parks, corporate campuses, professional offices, office/industrial flex space, and light industrial facilities with limited indoor fabrication/assembly. Heavier industrial operations with outdoor fabrication and/or storage are not appropriate in the Business Park development type.



Industrial

The Industrial Development Type are those locations that are suitable for light and heavy industrial related uses such as manufacturing, processing, warehouse, distribution and other types of industrial related facilities.

These areas are major employment and economic providers for the city, but may come with special zoning concerns relating to truck access, infrastructure needs and, depending on the nature of their operational characteristics, may require additional buffer or separation from encroachment of incompatible land uses.

Industrial facilities include the operation of laboratories, warehousing and distribution facilities, and a wide variety of light to heavy manufacturing and assembly of products; including compounding, processing, packaging or treatment of various goods. Manufacturing processes using animal products and by-products as component parts in finished materials are not permitted in Surprise. Objectionable vibrations, glare, noise, odors, and dust must be appropriately mitigated to protect adjacent non-industrial uses. Supporting retail, office and caretaker resident uses are appropriate where integral to the operation of the industrial facility.



Open Space Character Area

Open Space

The Open Space designation includes public and privately held lands that are to be preserved for natural areas, conservation areas and/or trail and other regional recreational facilities. Open space designations in Surprise are primarily designated in mountainous areas, along designated floodways, riverine areas, and along significant desert wash and other drainage corridors. Open space areas should be maintained in their natural state due to topographic, drainage, vegetative and landform constraints.

The Land Use Plan denotes a significant portion of the City's northern planning area as Open Space. These areas are primarily Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Arizona State Land Department (ASLD) managed lands consisting of mountainous terrain with slopes of 20% or greater. The City's intent is to establish a large conservation and recreation area at this location. Per Arizona Revised Statutes, ASLD and privately held lands with an Open Space designation may also be developed at a maximum of one dwelling unit per acre. In order to preserve ASLD and privately held lands as Open Space, acquisition of these lands must occur through purchase or trade.

The Land Use Plan also identifies a series of north-south linear open spaces that follow existing desert wash and drainage facilities. The City's intent is to establish an off-street trail system along these wash corridors to enhance non-motorized mobility and connectivity. Please refer to the Recreation & Open Space Element for additional details. Other Open Space designations include areas within designated floodways such as the Hassayampa River, McMicken Dam and Outlet Channel, and the Agua Fria River.

Development Types Common to Multiple Character Areas

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Community Commercial

The Neighborhood, Commerce & Office, and Employment Land Use Character Areas include parcels of land appropriate for Community Commercial use, even though they are not specifically illustrated on the Character Area Map. Community Commercial use is intended to provide retail goods and services that serve an approximate 1-2 mile primary trade area. Community Commercial uses are typically sited at the intersection of arterial roadways and may also be served by transit. Their typical building configuration is to contain at least one anchor (typically a grocery store) with additional secondary stores (i.e. drug, specialty, sports).



Public Facility

The Land Use Character Area Map includes the designation (by PF icon) of large scale public facilities. These uses are important to identify and make the public aware of the adjacency or proximity of non-residential uses that exist and/or are planned within the Surprise Planning Area. Such uses are typically of a size that serves a larger area of Surprise and can be located within any Character Area. These large scale public facilities may require on and off-site mitigation and/or buffering. Appropriate uses include but are not limited to: amphitheater/stadium (indoor/outdoor), electrical generation stations, electrical receiving stations, post-secondary educational facility, renewable/conventional energy production facility, solid waste landfill facility, solid waste transfer facility, wastewater treatment plants, water treatment plants, and worship facility.



While not shown on the Land Use Character Area Map, Neighborhood level public facilities can also be located in the Neighborhood, Commerce & Office, and Employment Character Area designations. These public facilities typically include primary (K-8) and secondary (8-12) schools, churches, fire/police stations, municipal/county governmental buildings or electrical substations because they serve the educational, religious and public safety needs of Surprise residents, employees and visitors within their own or several adjacent neighborhoods.

Character Sub-Areas

The City of Surprise has identified select geographies within the Municipal Planning Area where Character Sub-Areas are recognized. The intent of the Character Sub-Areas are to recognize the underlying Land Use Character Areas, but also provide added planning guidance in order to preserve and/or promote the unique qualities of that Sub-Area. Future specific area plans that provide a greater level of detail - character defining attributes including a refined integration of land uses, motorized and non-motorized circulation systems, and urban form design guidance is suggested. Each specific area plan will expressly identify the city's vision and design expectations for each individual Sub-Area. Proposed development activity within these designated Sub-Areas will then utilize the specific area plan guidance to embrace, preserve, or enhance the unique characteristics that define that particular development area. The following Character Sub-Areas are identified:

- Scenic Lands Development
- Surprise Center District
- Heritage District – Original Town Site
- Luke Compatibility District
- Transit Oriented Development
- Wildlife Linkage Corridors
- Aggregate Zones

Land Use Element



CHARACTER AREA COMPATIBILITY

<div><div></div> Encouraged</div> <div><div></div> Discouraged</div>				Adjacent Use											
				Neighborhood Character Area			Commerce & Office Character Area				Employment Character Area		Open Space Character Area	Community Commercial Development Type	Public Facility Development Type
				Dev. Type			Dev. Type				Dev. Type				
				Rural	Suburban	Urban	Mixed Use: Residential	Mixed Use: Commercial	Regional Commercial	Commercial Office	Business Park	Industrial			
Proposed Use	Neighborhood Character Area	Dev. Type	Rural	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	
			Suburban	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	
			Urban	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	
	Commerce & Office Character Area	Dev. Type	Mixed Use: Residential	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	
			Mixed Use: Commercial	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	
			Regional Commercial	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	
			Commercial Office	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	
	Employment Character Area	Dev. Type	Business Park	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	
			Industrial	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	
	Open Space Character Area			<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	
	Community Commercial Development Type			<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	
Public Facility Development Type			<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>		

- Encouraged
● Discouraged

CHARACTER AREA & ZONING COMPATIBILITY

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